

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A capping head device for application of caps on bottles or containers, ~~wherein it comprises~~ comprising:

a casing having an end mouth designed to fit on the bottle or container so as to define a closed chamber; ~~within which there is enclosed the head,~~

a capping head disposed within said chamber, said capping head directly contacting the caps so as to apply the caps to the bottles or containers; and

means for connecting said closed chamber with a source of vacuum for the purpose of communicating said vacuum to the space inside the bottle or container before the end of application of the cap on the bottle or container, and

wherein said casing is mounted on said capping head so as to be movable therewith towards and away from a bottle or container, and that said closed chamber is defined by said casing when the ~~latter~~ casing engages the bottle or container as a result of the lowering movement of the capping head onto the bottle or container.

2. (currently amended): The capping head device according to Claim 1, wherein said casing is mounted on the structure of the capping head with interposition of rolling bearings and has its end mouth made in an end wall that is elastically compliant within the casing.

3. (currently amended): The capping head device according to Claim 2, wherein said connection means comprise valve means set between the structure of the casing and the structure of the capping head.

4. (currently amended): The capping head device according to Claim 3, wherein said valve means comprise a valve body rigidly connected to the casing and mounted with the possibility of axial sliding with respect to a valve element, which is mounted with interposition of the aforesaid rolling bearings on the structure of the capping head.

5. (currently amended): The capping head device according to Claim 4, wherein said valve element has two opposite operating positions, in one of which it connects a chamber communicating with the space inside the casing to an opening for connection with the source of vacuum and in the other of which it connects the aforesaid chamber to an opening for connection to a discharge.

6. (canceled).

7. (currently amended): A capping machine, wherein it comprises one or more capping heads devices according to claim 1.

8. (canceled)

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)
Serial No.: 10/799,888
Sughrue Ref: Q79842

Kindly add the following new claims:

Claim 9 (new): The capping device of claim 1 further comprising a seal ring provided on said end mouth of said casing to provide a seal between the casing and the container.

Claim 10 (new): The capping device of claim 1, wherein said capping head includes means for imparting rotation to said caps.

Claim 11 (new): A capping device for applying a cap to a container under a vacuum condition, comprising:

 a capping head for contacting and applying the cap to the container;

 a casing substantially surrounding said capping head, said casing defining a chamber therein and being moveable relative to said container from a first position displaced from the container to a second position at which a bottom end portion of said casing contacts said container;

 means for applying a vacuum to said chamber, said vacuum being applied at least when said casing is in said second position to create a vacuum inside the container, wherein an exterior of said container below said casing is outside said chamber and not subjected to said vacuum.

Claim 12 (new): The capping device of claim 11, wherein said capping head is coupled to said casing.

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Claim 13 (new): The capping device of claim 11, wherein said capping head applies said cap to the container when said casing is in said second position.

Claim 14 (new): The capping device of claim 11, further comprising a seal ring provided on said bottom end portion of said casing so as to provide a seal between the casing and the container when said casing is in said second position.

Claim 15 (new): The capping device of claim 11, wherein said container is a bottle.

Claim 16 (new): The capping device of claim 11, wherein said capping head has means for imparting rotation to said cap.

Claim 17 (new): The capping device of claim 1, wherein an exterior of said bottle or container below said casing is outside said chamber and not subjected to said vacuum when said casing engages said bottle or container.